

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1-15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) An interface module usable in a system for forwarding packets, comprising:

an ingress port for receiving an incoming stream of data packets;

a switchover unit, when a group of three or more forwarding planes are connectable to the interface module the switchover unit being configured to select two forwarding planes of the group;

~~a transfer unit configured duplicator logic to transmit duplicate the data packets contained in the received incoming stream and transmit the duplicate data packets to each of two forwarding planes connectable to the interface module or~~ the selected two forwarding planes for processing, wherein identical state information is maintained in the ~~two forwarding planes or the~~ selected two forwarding planes based upon state information obtained from the transmitted data packets; ~~[[and]]~~

desprays logic to form an outgoing stream of data packets from the processed data packets forwarded from one of the selected two forwarding planes based on a signal from the switchover unit; and

an egress port for transmitting ~~[[an]]~~ the outgoing stream of data packets;

~~wherein the switchover unit is configured to select one of the two forwarding planes or the selected two forwarding planes and to form the outgoing stream of data packets from data packets received from the selected forwarding plane.~~

17. (Currently amended) The interface module of claim 16, wherein the switchover unit selects ~~one of the two forwarding planes or the selected two forwarding planes~~ of the group in response to receipt of a signal indicating the status of one or more of the ~~two forwarding planes or the selected two forwarding planes.~~

18. (Currently amended) A system for forwarding packets, comprising:  
a set of three or more forwarding planes that includes first and second forwarding planes configured to receive packets from a plurality of interface modules, process the received packets, and ~~transmit received~~ forward the processed packets to [[a]] the plurality of interface modules;

a controller to designate the first and second forwarding planes [[when]] from among the set ~~includes~~ of three or more forwarding planes, wherein the first and second forwarding planes maintain identical state information based upon state information obtained from the received packets; and

a first one of the interface ~~module~~ modules coupled to the first and second forwarding planes, ~~the first interface module receiving and including first logic to duplicate~~ packets contained in an incoming stream at an ingress port and ~~transmitting~~ transmit the packets to the first ~~forwarding plane~~ and [[the]] second forwarding plane planes for processing, and

~~second logic to form an outgoing stream of packets from the processed packets forwarded from one the first interface module further receiving packets from each of the first [[and]] or second forwarding planes based on a signal from the controller and transmitting the outgoing stream of packets at an egress port~~ ~~packets from a selected one of the first and second forwarding planes.~~

19. (Original) The system of claim 18, further comprising:

a routing engine, coupled to each of the first and second forwarding planes, for computing route information using routing protocols.

20. (Previously presented) The system of claim 19, wherein each of the first and second forwarding planes forwards received packets for transmission based on address information contained in respective packets and route information computed by the routing engine.

21. (Previously presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the first interface module selects one of the first or second forwarding planes in response to a signal indicating the status of one or more of the forwarding planes.

22. (Previously presented) The system of claim 19, wherein the state information comprises configuration information associated with the routing engine.

23. (Previously presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the received packets comprise at least one of data packets or control packets.

24. (Previously presented) The system of claim 18, wherein the state information comprises historical state information.

25 and 26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently amended) A network device, comprising:  
three or more packet forwarding engines (PFEs) configured to receive packets from ~~and transmit packets to at least one of a plurality of interface modules, process the received packets, and forward the processed packets to the plurality of interface modules;~~  
a controller to designate a first one of the PFEs and a second one of PFEs; and  
a first one of the interface modules coupled to the first and second PFEs, wherein the first interface module includes first logic to:  
receive at least one packet contained in an incoming stream at an ingress port,  
duplicate the at least one packet, and  
transmit the ~~at least one~~ duplicate packet to the first PFE and the second PFE for processing, wherein the first and second PFEs maintain identical state information associated with the ~~at least one processed~~ processed packet, and  
second logic to:  
receive packets from each of the first and second PFEs, and

transmit, at an egress port of the network device, ~~selected ones of the received~~  
~~packets-processed packet forwarded~~ from one of the first PFE or the second PFE based on a  
signal from the controller.

28. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27, further comprising:  
a routing engine coupled to each of the first and second PFEs, the routing engine  
to compute route information using routing protocols.

29. (Previously presented) The system of claim 28, wherein each of the first and  
second PFEs is configured to forward received packets for transmission based on address  
information contained in respective packets and route information computed by the routing  
engine.

30. (Previously presented) The system of claim 28, wherein the state information  
comprises configuration information associated with the routing engine.

31. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27, wherein the controller designates  
one of the first or second PFEs in response to a signal indicating the status of one or more of the  
PFEs.

32. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27, wherein the received packets  
comprise at least one of data packets or control packets.

33. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein the state information comprises historical state information.

34. (Currently amended) In a network device including a group of three or more packet forwarding engines (PFEs) configured to receive packets from and transmit packets to at least one of a plurality of interface modules coupled to the ~~first and second PFEs~~ group of PFEs, a method comprising:

selecting a first PFE and a second PFE of the group of PFEs;

receiving, by the at least one interface module, at least one packet contained in an incoming stream at an ingress port of the network device;

duplicating the at least one packet;

transmitting from the at least one interface module, the at least one duplicate packet to the first PFE and the second PFE for processing;

maintaining, in the first and second PFEs, identical state information associated with the ~~at least one processed~~ packet;

receiving, at the at least one interface module, the processed packets forwarded from each of the first and second PFEs; and

transmitting, by the at least one interface module, selected ones of the ~~received~~ forwarded packets from one of the first PFE or the second PFE at an egress port of the network device.

35. (Previously presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the network device further includes a routing engine coupled to each of the first and second PFEs, the method further comprising:

computing route information using routing protocols.

36. (Previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein each of the first and second PFEs forwards received packets for transmission based on address information contained in respective packets and route information computed by the routing engine.

37. (Previously presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the first interface module selects the first and second PFEs in response to a signal indicating a status of one or more PFE of the group.

38. (Currently amended) A network device including a set of three or more packet forwarding engines (PFEs) configured to receive packets from and transmit packets to at least one of a plurality of interface modules coupled to the first and second PFEs, the network device comprising:

means for selecting a first PFE of the set of PFEs and a second PFE of the set of PFEs;

means for receiving, by the at least one interface module, at least one packet contained in an incoming stream at an ingress port of the network device;

means for duplicating the at least one packet;

means for transmitting the ~~at least one~~ duplicate packet to the first PFE and the second PFE for processing;

means for maintaining, in the first and second PFEs, identical state information associated with the ~~at least one~~ processed packet;

means for receiving, at the at least one interface module, ~~packets~~ the processed packet forwarded from ~~each of the first and second PFEs~~ at least one of the first PFE or the second PFE; and

means for transmitting, by the at least one interface module, ~~selected ones of the received packets~~ the forwarded packet from one of the first PFE or the second PFE at an egress port of the network device based on a signal from the means for selecting.